What does the LTFT percentage mean in practice?

**For the trainee and their training**

Any trainee may apply to train Less Than Full Time (LTFT). If they are eligible (as judged by the criteria in the Gold Guide) it must be agreed with their specialty school what percentage of Full Time (FT) they will train. This percentage can be varied during their training but the GMC stipulates that it must be 50% or more to count as training. Some schools can only accommodate certain percentages (for instance only 50% is currently available in the Foundation Programme). Training LTFT reduces the amount of time the trainee will work each week and consequently increases the duration of their training proportionally; so a 50% LTFT will be a trainee for twice as long (FT x 100/50), an 80% LTFT will train for FT x 100/80. This percentage is used to calculate the whole time equivalent (WTE) i.e. how much training they would have received if they had been FT. This is vital in assessing their progress at an ARCP, when their achievements must be related to what would be expected if they were FT.

**For their employer**

In content the experience of the LTFT trainee’s programme should resemble that of the FT trainee but it will be pro-rata. There must be a practical balance between i) LTFT training arrangements, ii) the educational needs of both FT and LTFT trainees, and iii) the needs of the service. If a rota results in an LTFT trainee working a few more hours than their training percentage, they must be paid for doing these hours. This may result in them receiving a higher percentage of FT pay than their training percentage. However, the percentage relates to their training time, it is NOT the percentage of FT pay that they should receive, and it is recognised and accepted that it is more expensive to train LTFT than FT. HEE-EM considers it unacceptable that employers should require LTFT trainees to take days of unpaid leave to reduce their salary. Such adjustments result in LTFT trainees missing learning opportunities and may skew their experience. Also by doing so, the employer may fail to provide the agreed percentage of training time and so risk invalidating the trainee’s Certificate of Completion of Training (CCT).